(d) if so, the reasons therefor and whether in view of recent accidents at various Defence storage depots, whether Government propose to implement these recommendations; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (e) A team of officers visited certain countries in Europe in 1986 to carry out a study on modernization of ammunition depots with a view to construct cost effective store houses for ammunition. The team had, *inter alia*, recommended Igloo pattern of ammunition store houses, on trial basis, at some Ammunition Depots. On investigation, it was found that the soil bearing capacity at these stations was not suitable for construction of store houses on the Igloo pattern and the initial cost of construction of Igloo type store houses was higher than the cost of conventional construction. Nonetheless the Igloo type store house was considered economical in the long run because of its longer life. Government has, therefore, decided to construct a mix of both Igloo and conventional type of store houses, keeping in view the operational requiremens, availability and suitability of land and cost justification.

Armed Equipment and Vehicles Lying Idle for want of Spares

3390. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of the major armed equipment and vehicles which are lying idle for want of spares in different ordnance depots;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time lag involved between placing order for procurement and supply of spares; and

(d) the details of the steps taken to reduce this time lag?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (d) Assessment of major equipments and vehicles of the Army, lying idle for want of spares in different ordnance depots is an ongoing process and actual position in this regard is closely monitored. Procurement of defence stores including spares is effected through well laid-out procedures which, *inter alia*, stipulate the time to be given to the suppliers for supplying the stores.

The time lag involved between placing order for procurement and supply of stores ranges between 9 months and 2 months, depending upon the source through which the procurements made, *e.g.* through rate contract, ex-import, trade, public sector units or ordnance factories.

In case of procurement through ordnance factories, the lead time has been reduced from 24 months to 30 months.

Status of Military Nursing Service Officers

3391. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether members of Military Nursing Service are commissioned officers;

(b) if so, under what authority/order they are commissioned alongwith the details thereof;

(c) if not, why they are wearing the uniform with Rank Insignia of Army Commissioned Ranks like Lieutenants, Captains, Lt. Colonels etc.;

(d) whether MNS cadre is under the Army Act; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (c) Officers of the Military Nursing Service are commissioned under the authority of the Indian Military Nursing Service Ordinance 1943 (XXX of 1943).

(d) and (e) The MNS cadre is governed by Indian Military Nursing Service Ordinance 1943. Section 9 of the Ordinance provides that the Army Act 1950 shall, to such extent and subject to such adaptation and modifications as may be prescribed, apply to the officers of MNS. Under this provision, only some provisions of the Army Act 1950, relating to disciplinary matters are made applicable to the Military Nursing officers.

Army Level Talks with China

3392. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the outcome of the army level talks held with China;

(b) whether any steps have been taken to reduce tension on the Indo-China border; and